20th Feb:/40

We lead a distracted life - one week in London, the next here. As you can imagine I have there what I want here, & t'other way about. But here's your Lanki card. He's a little dog & brown finch silver - the cleverest imp that ever was - was Lord Morley's confidant - then, I think, Balfour - no, not Balfour, but some other P. Member. He's the great unknown behind politics; ~~Con~~ talked, influential, Anonymous. I like him; but then he thanks 3 Fs. the greatest book since Mill. However, he can't read my words. & says he's an influence

rather than a writer. WS can send L – who is sitting up on Electric stove, ordered 4 weeks ago, just come with the straw, – I'll ask him about the book I read. London is packed from momentous reports: here there is complete solitude, save for the Bells, & stray callers – a good deal. Now I'm sending my MS (Cor – I must correct Devon. Now I'm typing all day tomorrow & Margery Fry, & feel like a mask boy throwing up an Eclaire. What's happened about Nina? I read the scratched out story & was scandalled. What a racketty raa you Smyths are – Bankruptcy, Lapthorn, hunting, suicide, all in one Gulp. How then did you keep so dd neat & military upright & brass buttoned? Explain. & find about your book. Oh I have to lecture at Brighton next week – to the working classes. V.

Rota 2.v.63

Monks House

Rodmell

24th Dec. 1940.

I've only ten minutes before driving off across
the hill to lunch with Rogers mistress,
Helen Anrep. I've been so badgered, that as
you see, my hand trembles. Its partly
that damned mess of books & things; I cant
make a warm hollow for myself; my
mind is churned & frothed; & to write
one must be a clear vessel. Never mind;
you dont care much; I mean I scribble to you
as I scribble in my diary.
I'm awfully proud — that not the right
phrase — that my ~~X~~ started again on the
autobiography ~~X~~ was thinking the other
night that there's never been a
womans autobiography. Nothing to
Compare with Rousseau. Charity
& modesty Sutton has been the ruin.
Now why shouldnt you be not only

partly
owing
to me

the first woman to write an opera, but Egad, the first to tell the truth about herself? But the great artist the only person to tell the truth? I should like an analysis of your sex life. as Rousseau did his. More introspection. More intimacy. I leave it to you; for as for me I can't make my pen take my pity this cold morning. Mary has gone raving mad. She sent her car 120 miles yesterday. Love to bring me a bronze bust of Voltaire which she'd left me in her will. Why? I can't conceive. She was to have come herself. Can you explain the sudden rapture! X

Ver in dreadful poor. Lord, what a hill for rent — removal, & no money coming in, & the taxes! I shall have to write & work till I die — just as we thought we'd saved enough to live & inventing, till we died! But it's a good thing — being battered, & not cosseted. How does it affect you? Are you ruined, I mean can you pay your bills any income? Yes, I NYPL work some one day soon. Because I must exchange ideas; & I want to see you in your surroundings. But how?

There is a Lorebbe, but write, & I will try to find a better moon

Rota 2.4.63

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

27th March. 1940

Both of you have fibrositis in the back, & something more pernicious in the head. But what an amusing letter you wrote! — The Brontës, culminating in the sanitary towel which made me howl like an owl with Ecstasy. The influenza has receded; leaving about 1/2 my brain & all my old friend an Evening Visitor — like the frost after the fly. Oh I'm working so hard — 8 days to ending it: a Margery Fry has very reasonably shattered me today with some 100 corrections: ah to be Sintered; some to be continued: — yet her Kindness & reasonableness & such that I can't ignore. Yet why is filial love so deucedly persistent? And erratic? I can't even guess what she allows, what she forbids. I'm blind with accent insertions, & to release me will to you.

X Dr, of fairy times, continue the Nina-Helena Saga. D'ja know, I liked Helena; took, was stalk hunting? Hasn't the wretch rabid & racy & high handed, as well as the Hun & the miser? So I thought.
And such a mixup: the books: a old Leman whom I knew; & the dear translation love & the direct: & the bashfulness & the coarse-cast: & the naiveté; & the courage: & I suppose all sorts of horrors, not hidden, but exposed — in heels. X However it passed me a whole day in bed amusingly. I heard of them all from the Thynnes, days ago, & liked the whole tale, which Beatrice carried further.
Well, I'm fixed to my shoemaker, bound all the week in them — oh Glory to be Quit of Corrections ~~to~~ till the proofs come! And to do nothing — & to let my Cistern fill — & perhaps see a friend or two, — & write my Diary in talking tick the sun goes down the sky. Why marriage Ever again kept the Load on one's shoulders! Vita says she's Coming. Has Gwen left her? & V. now Catholic? Can I plunge into all this? You would. V.

Rota 2.4.63

NYPL

Monk House, 22nd April 1940
Rodmell

I told ju. What dea. I'm perfectly well – what more I dashed off Pageu – it may come out with luck in June. But its only a book for old crones so dont cut your teeth in it. Now I have to write my lectures, or rather to re-write it – an hour, for 30 typists – which is Cost me more trouble than 2 common readers. That what

comes of yielding to the importunity of a wretched little man who lives on tinned tomatoes on top of a hill. My swan song - positively my last public misery.

Now take care, when ah yaas
Joints have been loosened,
how you cross the floor.
Poor John Lehmann's mother
stretched herself - broken thigh -
ah for a slip on her rug, —
my very old venerable
Cousin Herbert Fisher killed
by a NYPL Lorry. Please Ethel
Dear look to the right & left
& don't come out behind a
Bus.

I'm amused that you both think my
Gleichen Sketch was intricate.
Shows my filth — like it or
lump it — No heart you say: how
then do I transfer these
images to my Lenbach paper brain?
Because I have a heart. Yes, it's
the heart that makes the paper
take, anyway. I beg you
to consider this theory in the
night watches. X

I often consider you, when I
draw my curtain about
Dawn, across the sky. Otherwise
how remote the stars would
be. If you think of Romans
when star gazing their horrid

little Mare is outfaced. So please
Lord me, no publish — for I'll
beg it — from back. so that I may
have something to counter
the stars with Two
Swallows seen today: a
Cuckoo calling.
I'm reading Sydney Smith — his
life — with only one wish
in the world: that I'd
married him. But it
odd when the rumble tumble
of time turns up some
entirely lovable man: and
did you ever know
Clara Novello Davies? I'm
reading her too. Not lovable
I guess: but tell me.

Rita 2. 4. 69

NYPL

Quick letter about Nina H. & Helena T.

Monk's House
Rodmell
near Lewes
Sussex

17th May 40.

I've not written, for one thing because, till 2 days ago, I was almost blind, entering 3 different Figs comments on the edge of proofs, & altering my own words to admit them how that's done. And I don't suppose it's any use, all that labour: we shall have to postpone what does Longman say about your book?

It's a good thing to have books to intervene in — & any number of little drudgeries: food to order: a village play to rehearse; & old Mrs. Lowe & her idiot boy — they took an hour this afternoon. We shant I suppose be killed; but I think of Montaigne, let death find me planting cabbages. A chicane has struck our gooseberries. Percy is

mowing the lawn, & I have just forced myself to
answer a lady who wants to know — what, dont
matter. Still, in this numb & prosaic Mali,
I should like a letter. Dont you owe me one?
Oh about Hotlby — Jer. the letter I answered was
from a weaver at Hull who knew her by sight.
X I'll return South Riding. Yes its my own handwriting
but, I could no more return to the page where I stopped
than to last years Tatler: its already an outworn date
picture paper. I repeat — this is my own Odyssey. X
I'll tell you what I find. — reading a whole post
is confusing: Coleridge I bought in an old type. Copy
tarnished brown, yellow & dog-eared: & I began, & wearily
& skipped the high peaks, & gradually climbed to the
top of the pinnacle, by a winding unknown way.
So then I bought a Shelley: the Oxford, with
marked: but also no edited anthology cabinet
piece. How low I'm going to explore in the same
sauntering under the bramble way. I find the world
& Ethel Smyth very effective when I make between the
words — 3 & 4. X Well — I'm diverting, &
work only to say I hope we may each more
meet. But when I'm in London, you're not.
Next week I shall be there only to get through the
Rembrandt V.

Rota 2.V.63

NYPL